Doodlebugs Day Nursery (Bridge of Earn)
Day Care of Children

Edinburgh Road
Bridge of Earn
Perth
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Telephone: 01738 813 870

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
26 January 2024

Service provided by:
Doodlebugs Day Nurseries Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2013012143

Service no:
CS2013319774

About the service

Doodlebugs Day Nursery (Bridge of Earn) is one of two privately owned day care of children services operated by Doodlebugs Day Nurseries Ltd. The service works in partnership with Perth and Kinross Council. The nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 46 children up to the age of eight years at any one time.

The nursery is located on the outskirts of Bridge of Earn in a traditional stone built, two storey villa. Playrooms for the oldest children are located on the upper floor with children aged between one and three cared for in four rooms on the ground floor.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 23 January 2024 between 09:00 and 16:00 and 24 January 2024 between 09:00 and 15:15. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- observed children using the service.
- received feedback from twenty families from our online questionnaire.
- spoke with the staff and management team
- observed practice.
- reviewed documents

Key messages

- Children experienced warm, caring, nurturing approaches to support their wellbeing
- Children benefitted from a service that was well resourced with natural and real resources to promote curiosity, inquiry, and creativity.
- Children experienced outdoor play that provided a variety of opportunities to be creative, develop problem solving skills, and have fun.
- Children benefitted from a warm, welcoming and homely nursery which gives a strong message to children and families that they mattered.
- There was as strong ethos of improvement to support high quality outcomes for children and families.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care, play and learning? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, caring, nurturing approaches to support their wellbeing. Staff were kind and respectful to children which contributed to positive relationships. Staff offered reassurance where children needed. We observed praise, cuddles and reassurance from staff which supported secure attachments and positive relationships. This contributed to children being happy, safe and secure in the nursery.

Children experienced sociable and unhurried mealtimes with a relaxed, positive atmosphere. They were provided with appetising homemade meals which were nutritious and well-balanced, supporting children to be healthy. Children were effectively supported to develop independence skills for example serving their food and pouring their own water or milk. Familiar staff supported younger children effectively over the lunch period which contributed to the nurturing calm experience. Staff recognised daily routines such as mealtimes and snacks as an opportunity to promote close attachments with children and used this time to engage in meaningful conversations. Children were kept safe as staff had a good awareness of choking. One parent commented, 'There has been a new cook within the setting and it has been great as she is so motivated and keen, that it gives the children the best ways of trying new foods weather that's shaped in themes for special occasions, to putting some things on the menu that I wouldn't of thought of cooking'.

Children's safety and wellbeing was supported through effective arrangements for sleep routines. Staff were responsive to children's individual needs and cues and ensured they were offered a sleep.

Children's wellbeing was effectively supported through personal planning which had been reviewed with families. Staff knew children well and were aware of their individual needs and strategies in place to provide effective support. They used this information in practice, to ensure children received care that was tailored to their needs. Staff spoke knowledgably about the children, describing their individual characteristics and any sensitivities they may have. This contributed positively to children's self-esteem and sense of wellbeing. As a result, children were confident in approaching staff for help or reassurance.

Children's personal care needs were met with dignity and respect. For example, children were sensitively asked if their nappy could be changed. Warm interactions during nappy changing created a relaxed experience where positive attachments were formed. Children were encouraged to be independent which helped to increase their confidence and responsibility throughout daily experiences. We reviewed the procedures for storing administering medication and found that these were carried out appropriately, helping to ensure that children's needs were met in a safe manner.

Parents were welcomed into the service to drop off and collect their children. This contributed to creating positive attachments between children and staff, and enabled opportunity for information to be shared between nursery and home.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and Learning

Children were leading their own play and learning across all rooms within the nursery. The effective and well considered use of real resources and natural materials provided children with a wealth of exciting opportunities to be curious, creative, and develop enquiry skills across all areas of learning. Literacy opportunities were very well supported as children had access to various books and texts; including maps, fiction and non-fiction books and resources to support early writing skills were easily accessible for all children.

Children were being effectively supported to develop their language skills as staff used age-appropriate words, conversations, and interactions, including repetition of words and narrative for the younger children. Older children had some extension of learning through open ended questioning from staff. The use of real, interesting objects provided rich learning opportunities to support numeracy development; this included using thimbles to count, continuous access to sand trays supported understanding of early mathematical concepts and counting songs. As a result, children were engaged in play that enhanced their learning.

Children were engaged in high quality outdoor play experiences that provided a variety of opportunities to be creative, develop problem solving skills, and have fun. We observed children enjoying exploring in jumping in puddles and squelching in the mud. The outdoor area had various exciting play opportunities for children, including a well-resourced shed with materials to extend their play, a caravan that provided shelter and a place to engage in imaginative play. As a result, children were happy and engaged in play outdoors.

Younger children were effectively supported to learn through schematic play experiences as staff used their knowledge to provide individualised support to children. For example, staff created spaces which supported children's enclosing schema and provided experiences that supported rotational schematic play. This meant that children's needs were being met in a way that was right for them.

Planning, observation, and assessment were in the early stages for older children. Observations sampled were descriptive and infrequent, with next steps not yet detailed to allow effective planning. This had been identified as an area for development by the service, with staff training planned with support from the local authority. Some parents commented that they did not receive enough information about their child's learning and development, comments included, 'I have no idea of how my child is developing in specific areas beyond broad and quick handovers. We had our first parents' night this week which was valuable and a welcome step. I think better communication, structured to allow us to know how our child is doing educationally and developmentally and improving the specific focus of activities', and 'We have recently had feedback on my child's learning as a result of a staff member going on maternity leave and doing handover. However, this is not something that we are routinely provided with. Learning journals were set up but have not been used'.

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The entrance area where parents and children first came was warm, welcoming and gave a strong message to children and families that they mattered. Children accessed an environment that was comfortably furnished and welcoming. All rooms had natural light and were well ventilated, there was ample space indoors and outdoors for children to play and explore together or alone if they chose to do so.

All children had fun and enjoyed their play throughout the day as play spaces took account of their stages of development and learning. Children's interests and curiosities were reflected in the environment which contained an extensive variety of high-quality provision that supported play. For example, sand boxes, curiosity corners, and real-life resources in rooms provided rich play experiences. The continuous provision indoors and outdoors had been well considered to include age and stage appropriate resources, and interesting, open ended natural materials. The staff team ensured that areas were well resourced, set up and supported children to be independent and lead their own learning. As a result, children were enabled to explore opportunities which promoted their curiosity and imagination.

There were infection prevention and control procedures in place which supported a safe environment. For example, the service was clean and well maintained. Food safety practices were robust and provided high levels of safety for children. We observed children being supported to understand the need for good hygiene and hand washing at necessary times. This contributed to minimising risks of infection for both the staff team and children. However, the service had identified that the current nappy changing facilities did not meet best practice guidance and did not support effective infection prevention and control or children's privacy and dignity. The service had been proactive in liaising with the provider to develop plans to improve the nappy changing facilities although no timescales for improvement works had been finalised at the time of the inspection.

How good is our leadership? 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this quality key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The manager was aspirational in their approach to ensuring the service was meeting the needs of children, families, and the community. There was as strong ethos of improvement to support high quality outcomes for children and families. Parents comments included, '[Manager is] always thinking of ways to enhance the setting for the benefits of the children', and 'it feels like the staff that are there are committed to [manager] ethos and she is very visible in the setting. She is more available to feedback to and sets the tone in the morning by being the person who answers the door. More recently she has emailed asking for feedback'.

Effective quality assurance and self-evaluation processes allowed meaningful opportunities for the management team and staff to review and monitor various aspects of the service. This meant that areas for improvement had been identified, shared with staff and actions taken to make positive changes to children's experiences. This resulted in significant positive impacts on children's learning and experiences. One parent told us, 'The new manager has worked hard with the help from staff to improve the nursery and learning experience for the children'.

A realistic improvement plan was driving forward nursery developments. Priorities were outcome focussed with realistic targets which focused on outcomes for children. On going monitoring and reviewing of the improvements meant the manager and staff had a clear overview on the progress of the priorities. This meant children benefitted from a service that continues to improve.

The manager and staff fully engaged in the inspection process and appreciated the guidance and suggestions offered by the inspectors. The manager and staff demonstrated their commitment to the service and were motivated to make improvements to ensure positive outcomes for children.

How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

The nursery had gone through a period of significant staff changes. A number of parents commented on the high staff turnover during this time but recognised the recent stability in this. The manager was keen to ensure staff recruited had the right skills, values, and experience. As a result, at times, there was a reliance on supply staff to ensure minimum adult: child ratios were met whilst recruitment was underway. Parents comments include, 'Really happy with the stability since Jane has taken over. It seems like she truly has the children's best interests at heart. Always thinking of ways to enhance the setting for the benefits of the children', and 'In the last year staff have changed considerably. Nearly a full new team. I feel this is starting to turn a corner and settle down. There seems to be a more experienced staff team within the nursery now which is welcomed'.

Children were cared for by staff who were warm, caring and nurturing. Staff provided individualised support by engaging with children throughout the inspection. Most staff demonstrated an awareness of when and how to effectively intervene, picking up on cues to support children's wellbeing and extend their play experiences. This contributed to the positive relationships between staff and children. Parents comments included, 'Lovely staff, caring and passionate about the care of our children', and 'The staff we've experienced so far are fantastic, really friendly and caring and I feel very comfortable leaving [child] in the setting with the ladies'.

Staff deployment had been considered by management to ensure staff with the right skills and experience were deployed in each room. This was continuously reviewed to ensure children's care needs were met. Busier times of the day had been taken into account to ensure children experienced familiar staff. For example, over the lunch period and supporting children at arrival and home time. However, we noted at times there was a heavy reliance on the manager to cover whilst care routines were being carried out. The management team shared with us their plans address this to ensure that children had consistency throughout their day at nursery.

Positive working relationships had been formed between staff which meant they were all meaningfully contributing to the inclusive and positive ethos of trust and respect. The staff team worked collaboratively and supported each other well. Regular team meetings enabled staff to take part in professional discussions, reflect as a team, and discuss children's learning, and nursery improvements. The leadership ensured that staff were meaningfully included in this process. As a result, the staff team were involved in the development of the service, which contributed to the shared aspirations of the team. This meant that staff felt valued and empowered to grow professionally and provided children with a happy, secure, and supportive environment.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good

How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good

How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good

How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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